

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /037 W
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R 181258Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0628
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUCHAREST 4996

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, RO
SUBJECT: DISTURBANCE IN BUCHAREST

1. WE HAVE NOW HEARD THE SAME BASIC STORY FROM A SUFFICIENTLY
WIDE VARIETY OF SOURCES TO CONCLUDE THAT THERE WAS A DISTUR-
BANCE IN DOWNTOWN BUCHAREST PROBABLY AROUND MID-DAY ON
FRIDAY JULY 14. MOST COMMONLY HEARD VERSION CLAIMS A
MILITIAMAN (POLICEMAN) AT MAJOR PIATA UNIRII MARKET WAS
HASSELING A GYPSY FLOWER VENDOR, A YOUNG MAN CAME TO HER
DEFENSE, PUSHING AND SHOIVING BETWEEN HIM AND POLICEMAN
ENSUED, POLICEMAN FIRED WARNING SHOT IN AIR WHICH
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POSSIBLY WOUNDED OR KILLED A PASSERBY, OTHERS JOINED IN
MELEE, AND POLICEMAN POSSIBLY JOINED BY ONE OR TWO
COLLEAGUES BARRICADED HIMSELF/THEMSELVES INSIDE A SHOP
WHERE THEY WERE PELTED BY ROCKS AND BOTTLES BY ANGRY
CROWD. VARIATIONS OF ABOVE HAVE CROWD SETTING FIRE TO
STORE, KILLING THE POLICEMAN, OVERTURNING A POLICE PADDY
WAGON AND BEATING ITS OCCUPANTS; MAXIMUM DEAD WE HAVE HEARD

IN ANY VERSION IS FOUR.

2. DISTURBANCE WAS REPORTEDLY PRECEDED ONE OR TWO DAYS EARLIER BY UNRELATED INCIDENT BETWEEN CITIZEN AND POLICEMAN IN WHICH LATTER REPORTEDLY DREW HIS POSTOL AND FIRED A WARNING SHOT OR SHOTS, APPARENTLY WITHOUT CAUSING INJURIES.

3. COMMENT. IT WAS HOT AND MUGGY IN BUCHAREST LAST WEEK, AND TEMPERS WERE FRAYED. WERE IT NOT FOR TIGHTLY CONTROLLED NATURE OF ROMANIAN SOCIETY, WE WOULD DISMISS ABOVE INCIDENTS AS THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN BIG CITIES DURING SUMMER DOG DAYS. HOWEVER, FACT THAT NO REPORT WHATSOEVER WAS CARRIED IN ROMANIAN MEDIA HELPS TO SPREAD WILDLY EXAGGERATED VERSIONS WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY APPEAR IN WESTERN PRESS, WHICH WILL QUICKLY RECALL THAT A QUASI-RIOT ALSO HAPPENED IN BUCHAREST ABOUT THIS TIME LAST YEAR IN CONNECTION WITH AN OVERSOLD ROCK CONCERT/SOCCER MATCH (77 BUCHAREST 4997 AND PREVIOUS). NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE ARE RELUCTANT TO DRAW ANY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE STATE OF LAW AND ORDER OR PUBLIC MORALE FROM THESE INCIDENTS.
AGGREY

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